

Summarization from Reading Assignment & Meeting Activity

- **From Group share:**

- *Readicide* is a book other teachers should read as well, even if it is just a chapter or two to highlight some of the important points. The book also includes a website that has information others may find valuable.
- Students' inability to read or read well is an issue that needs to be focused on by the entire school.
- In our efforts to increase students' reading abilities we may experience a decline in PSSA scores before an increase.
- We need to raise the bar for students and give them the skills to reach the next level. It is not okay to enable students to be apathetic towards school.
- Test prep is not the only cause of student reading problems.
- Silent reading is something that should be in all schools. Students need to read more in order to get better at reading.
- Accelerated Reader may not be helping our students to be better readers, because too much emphasis is placed on passing the quizzes rather than reading for fun.
- Teachers need to be the champions of reading.
- If things do not change, kids will fail.

- **From One-Pagers:**

- *I noticed...*
 - that books, and having the opportunity to read them, are disappearing from schools across the country in order to prepare for test taking.
 - that not just reading is being affected. Some districts' curricula are being altered and narrowed to make more room for test preparation, including time spent on social studies, foreign language and music classes.
 - that our school suffers from readicide. At each faculty meeting or in-service our focus is on increasing test scores. Teachers are assigned to develop test preparation strategies including reading short passages and responding to multiple choice or open-ended questions.
 - the author does not think much of state tests.
 - that readers need to read a lot to become better readers.
 - that perhaps we do have too many standards. We try to do too much in too little time.
 - that mathematics was not included in the list of courses in which students are disinterested in when they leave (p.10). It should have been because students are disinterested in math for the same reasons.
 - that Gallagher believes strongly that every student should have a book to take home every night.
- *I wonder...*
 - how Gallagher's students do on normed tests.
 - how to address readicide and still make AYP.
 - how much time and emphasis is focused on reading at MWSD.
 - if Jane Healy is correct that ADD may be linked to television and video games.
 - if we can find more money for lots more books.
 - if I do this? Is my course a mile wide and an inch deep?
 - if our schools have ample books, are students reading them?
 - what could happen if all teachers incorporated reading into their classrooms.

- what would happen if politicians would go back to portfolios and not focus so much on tests.
- why we are not doing something about all the fact that we have too many state standards.
- what would happen if politicians read this book, paid attention to long-term results, and realized the damage “No Child Left Behind” has actually done.
- *I was reminded of...*
 - calculating tax returns and having a savvy accountant find every loop hole possible. Stakes are so high it would not be surprising if districts were also looking for loop holes.
 - the importance of reading real-world text I think many students are not given the opportunity to read real-world text. Would having the background knowledge provided from reading these types of materials help students increase their test scores? Are students in our district exposed to real-world text at home or is school the only place?
 - our district I have heard students (even a teacher or two) state negative comments about reading like: “I was never a good reader, so it does not matter in today’s world.” “I hate to read.” “Reading is boring.” I have heard some reading teachers state they are only allowed to read one novel a marking period to students, so they can focus more on skills in the basal, or because there are not enough books, or because of time constraints.
 - my childhood and how much I enjoyed reading.
 - that students need authentic reading.
 - the year the Terra Nova test included a reading selection on mythology. I remembered being angry about that – thinking that the vocabulary alone would discourage students from the start.
- *I am surprised that...*
 - the Texas test scores were reported so inaccurately. I’d like to know how many schools have done similar reporting.
 - there is evidence that school districts cheated on reporting results. I can’t imagine our district doing that. On the other hand I understand that when insurmountable pressures are being put upon you, you might consider desperate measures.
 - sadly, schools are working against developing independent readers
 - students who read the most for fun have higher reading and writing test scores. I’d like to know if that is true at all grade levels. One thing that stuck in my mind is that students without prior knowledge are at a disadvantage regardless of reading ability.
 - on average, Americans ages 15 to 24 spend almost two hours a day watching TV and only seven minutes reading. Ok, maybe I am not really surprised by the statistic, but I didn’t realize the gap was so large.
 - since 2002 our overall reading scores have not increased.
- *I realized...*
 - that the Paige Paradox (p.17) is exactly what we are doing in our schools. It is not our school’s choice, but it is what has been put in place.
 - that the goal to have every student at the proficient level by 2014 is absolutely unattainable. As the book mentioned, it is used as a “hammer to push more students into a readicide curriculum.” There is a major achievement gap in schools today and I would agree that it can be attributed to all of the testing that is taking place. I had even more of a realization of this unattainable goal after reading the Paige Paradox. It appears to be a vicious cycle that only hurts students in the long run.
 - that students are not reading enough (variety) in school.
 - that students need to be encouraged to read at home as well as in school. I often forget that some students might not have books available to them outside of school. I do allow

my students to take books from my classroom to read; however, I am always leery that I won't get the books back. We can encourage students to read at home, however if their parents aren't avid readers will our encouragement help?

- that it is important to have novels in class.
- we as a district are falling into this trap.
- that our librarians have done an incredible job trying to provide reading materials.
- that if things don't change soon education will fail.
- that I need to continue to look for ways to make mathematics more authentic to my students.
- that the National Reading Panel's position on SSR is not supported by the studies (Gallagher cites).
- *If I were...*
 - president I would get rid of NCLB and try to change our educational system.
 - able, I would send this book to all supporters of NCLB and high-stakes testing.
- *The central issue(s) is (are)...*
 - (for me is) are we as a district, board, administration, teachers, and parents willing to stand up and say that we are not going to take government pressure anymore. We know what is best for kids. Their goals are unattainable. We want to produce kids who are good citizens and that includes children who love to read. If our test scores suffer because we are doing the right thing, then so be it. Will we refuse to cave in to this downward spiral of low achievers continuing to achieve below acceptable levels?
 - that many schools in our country no longer have an emphasis on reading and the importance that it has on preparing students to be life-long learners? "Value" reading has taken the place of reading for pleasure and many times completely removes academic material. Schools intensely focus on raising state-mandated test scores, and in turn, are largely contributing to the development of readicide. I found it interesting that studies found there is a lack of interesting reading materials in our school. How can educators expect students to have a desire to read when there are not reading materials of interest available to students? Sadly, some students face the worst case scenario and are having novels and other reading materials completely removed from their schools.
 - connecting reading to what you already know
 - that our schools are too focused on test preparation. Unfortunately, that pressure is placed on the schools from the government and NCLB. Teachers are afraid to let go of the test preparation in fear that our students will no longer be proficient. We are constantly reminded (from our administrators) to prepare students for the state tests. Students who are proficient and advanced need to make gains, students who are basic need to become proficient, and students who are below basic need to really catch up with the others. It feels as though test preparation will always be the focus in America's schools.
 - that students are not reading enough in school.
 - that students do not enjoy reading and scores are reflecting that behavior.
 - learning to take test is not really learning. It is killing reading. The Paige Paradox expresses it perfectly by showing the parts of this deadly cycle.
- *One consequence of readicide could be...*
 - that students do not learn to read outside school and therefore lack real-world knowledge.
- *If _____, then ...*
 - If everyone realized that universal proficiency is an absurd goal, then why are we still busting our rear ends trying to achieve it (p.23)?
 - If readicide is a concern in our district, then what can be done to correct it?

- If everyone took a stand against what is happening in our schools, if educators didn't just accept things for how they are, then students would have a chance to experience reading for what it is meant to be. Reading is meant to be enjoyable and informative and yet that is not how it is being present to today's students. Time needs to be set aside specifically for students to read during the school day. In order for that to happen though, books need to be available to the students. If students and their education was our country's focus, then we wouldn't be facing readicide.
- If the author had 2000 books in his room, were they all "approved?" Then what happens if one of the books is rumored to be "inappropriate" by a parent?
- If readicide is really occurring in our district, then where do we go from here? I believe it is, but to get everyone on board seems almost impossible. What baby steps can we make, that people will accept, that will put us on the right track? If people will see how beneficial small changes can be, they may be willing to try bigger changes.
- *I'm not sure...although it seems...*
 - I'm not sure how I can reconcile, for my students, the need to teach them to read, and the desire to expose them to good and fun literature. I still believe that unless I teach them fundamentally basic skills of phonics, vocabulary, and fluency that they missed somewhere else, or weren't ready to learn, they won't stand a fighting chance on our state tests. On the other hand, am I destroying their love of reading – probably. I need to somehow achieve that delicate balance and I don't have a lot of time during the day to do it. How can I introduce recreational reading into my classroom?
 - I'm not sure about poverty in the MWSD. I get what it means, but I don't understand the impact in the classroom.
- *Others:*
 - I think that the majority of teachers value reading, but might not be incorporating reading strategies into their lessons the way they would prefer. Perhaps time is a factor. Lack of classroom novels for every child. Fear of not covering everything in the basals/textbooks. Spending time prepping the students for the 4Sights and PSSA tests, etc...
 - If the government is going to issue ridiculous mandates, they should not be surprised at the ways schools try to report their scores.
 - I am not sure I agree with the statement that the curriculum should not depend heavily on students acquiring facts because facts change (p.13). Mathematical facts do not change.
 - I love the statement, "Schools...are very out of sync with what's going to be needed in our thinking for the next century, and, in fact, is desperately needed right now." (p.40)
- *One idea I would like to use in my classroom is:*
 - "Article of the Week"
 - To add recent news articles, magazines, and events to the classroom setting
 - Establish a book flood zone! Although I already have a large amount of books on relevant topics, I want to build upon the existing collection.
 - Ensuring that many of the books are "kid-friendly" reading as opposed to resource books.
 - Students recommend books by writing short introductions, telling the class about them, or using school announcements.
 - Introduce my students to fun literature
 - Teaching/creating "expert citizens" (creativity, common sense, wisdom, ethics, dedication, honesty, hard work, how to win/lose, fair play, life-long learning, teamwork)
 - More reading. Continue using articles like I have in the past. Add in: updated articles; student discovered items and small group discussion.

- I have already added a summary session for Fridays to my classes. Newspapers. More talking to the text.
- *One idea I would like to share with other teachers is:*
 - The importance of providing opportunities for students to read just for fun.
 - Teachers should extend the book flow in their classrooms by adding exciting books for students to enjoy
 - The need to have free sustained silent reading. Kids can read any book they want to and it is not graded, however, I would like the students to share his/her ideas about the book.
 - Encourage students to read at school and at home
 - Encourage students to visit the library where there is reading material that should address every student's interests – a “book flood” zone.
 - News articles in the classroom
 - It's scary to think that students are not truly being challenged or working to reach their potential. I would want to make sure teachers and administrators are aware of the damage done to adolescents when students' brains are not stretched by longer, challenging works.
 - Librarians can help kids use Access PA to find books on a variety of topics.
 - The concept of readicide
 - SSR is valuable! Novels are valuable!
 - Literacy strategies (p.50)